

ANNAMITE CIVILIZATION

nass of spirits. Annam, like all theocratic countries, has clothed its sovereign with divinity. The Emperor belongs to the dragon race and he has a controlling power over all genii. His sacred person is surrounded by innumerable taboos because the enormous quantity of *tin* he possesses makes him dangerous to approach. Similarly in the animal world, the tiger—and to a lesser extent the whale and the dolphin—are ill of *tin*. The tiger is so fearsome that one cannot pronounce his name without risking invoking his awesome presence. As with the Emperor, a whole vocabulary of indirect references to him has grown up. If a man-eating tiger is trapped, a sacrifice is offered to him before he is killed, and in certain regions his permission is asked before chopping down a tree. In general, what is most intimately concerned with life—like sex, birth, marriage, or death—has acquired the greatest quantity of taboos. Sorcerers' power, like their amulets and incantations, is based upon the optimistic belief that they know the rules that govern the spirit world. Certain places, like the hearth, are known to be their favourite haunt, and have in consequence a cult of their own. Cannon are believed to be the favoured residence of warriors' souls, so military operations are placed beside them. During the French attack on Hue one day the cannon refused to work until it was given its regular repast which had been forgotten during the heat of battle. The relations of these spirits with mankind are usually unpleasant. They show a remarkable ingenuity in assuming disagreeable and Protean forms, but they are meretricious and easily duped. Though they are more powerful than the living, they are even less intelligent. To outwit them successfully requires the aid of magicians and a lifetime's attention to the

appropriate rites.

It is their hierarchical organization that is the
Annamites* most
Anginal religious contribution. Hierarchy serves to
clarify, to a slight
[egree, the numerous and ubiquitous deities of the
Annamite pantheon.
L vague unity of command over them is given to the
Emperor of Jade
vfa0 exercises dominion over the three worlds of
earth, sky, and sea.
Each of the male spirits in these worlds has a feminine
counterpart, who
a recent years have been receiving more worship than
the male con-
tingent. This is primarily due to the attraction of this
cult for women
who find compensation in it for their exclusion from the
ancestral cult.
The\$e worlds are minutely organized in the same way
as the empire of
itself. The large percentage of magic and the
low standing of
s priestesses have forced this cult of the three worlds
into grave
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